THE

Present Corruption

OF

BRITONS;

BEING A

PARAPHRASE

On the LATTER PART of

Mr. *P*—*E*'s first Dialogue,

ENTITLED,

One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight.

Heu Pietas! heu prisca Fides! ——— VIRGIL.

LONDON:

Printed; and Sold by THOMAS GRAY in *Exeter-Change*;
and by the Bookfellers of *London* and *Westminster*.

(Price Six-pence)

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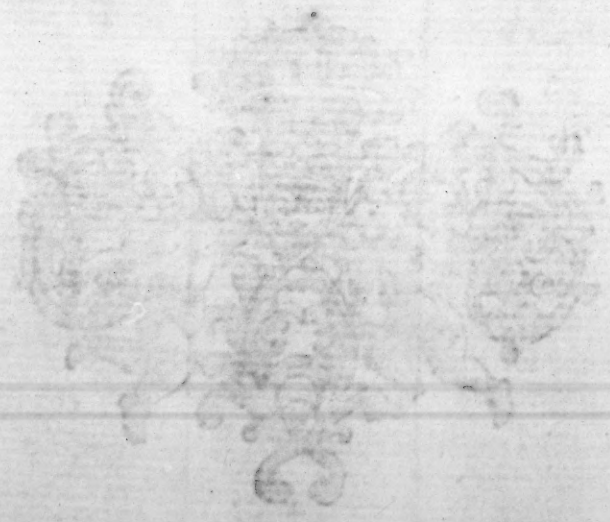
No. I. P — L's Fu[illegible] Dialogue,

BETWEEN

One Thoufand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight.

Price [illegible] ! How pr[illegible]ce ! ——— Vi[illegible]



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TO THE

Reverend Dr. *YOUNG*,

AUTHOR OF

The Universal Passion,

THIS

P I E C E

IS INSCRIB'D,

By B. MORRICE.

Tho' Pride, or the fantastic Love of Fame,
Is universal——and deserving Blame;
Thou now may'st change the Tenour of thy Strain,
More universal——is the Love of Gain.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

PREFACE.

AS *the true, or genuine Aim of* SATIRE *is the* Redreſs of Evils, *it is particularly requir'd to be bold, impartial and ſevere.*

Bold, That it may attack all who are the proper Objects of its Indignation ; impartial, That it may do them compleat Juſtice; *and ſevere, That it may deter them from perſiſting in their Practices, and Others from falling into the ſame :*

And tho' the ancient Greek *and* Roman Satiriſts *poſſeſs'd a manly Freedom, which the World ſeems not much inclineable to permit to Moderns ; yet ſurely any Man, by the Right of Nature, has ſtill Liberty to vindicate and aſſert the Cauſe of Reaſon, or of Truth ; eſpecially if attended with a generous Deſign of rectifying thoſe* Abuſes, *to which* Cuſtom *is too indulgent, and over which, the Law cannot intirely exert its Authority; nor can the moſt Vicious and Arrognant, with the leaſt Pretence of Juſtice, deny it.*

The PREFACE.

That, the present Time affords fit Matter for the Exercise of this useful and beneficial Quality, I believe no truly-impartial and discerning BRITON *will in Conscience, refuse to acknowledge; and whereas Mr.* P-----E, *in his Satire, (intitled,* One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight) *has shewn a noble and just Indignation at the present reigning Enormities; I conceiv'd it would not be amiss to enlarge on that Part of it, which I thought most considerable.*

I have made use of some of his Notions, and a few of his Expressions; of which, as a Paraphraser, *I hope I may be allow'd the Privilege.*

Whether I have carry'd on the Theme with suitable Earnestness, Vehemence of Imagination, and Strength and Beauty of poetic Diction, is left for the Judicious to determine.

My chief Desire is, That, my degenerate Countrymen *in this* Mirrour, *having some Sight of the Foulnesses and Deformities of their Manners, may be thence induc'd to find some Sense of Shame, and reveal some Sign of Amendment.*

THE

THE

Preſent Corruption

OF

BRITONS, &c.

VIRTUE's the Mind's Direction—and Defence
Againſt th' Allurements of miſguided Senſe;
It is the Law of Nature rightly trac'd,
By no falſe Views perverted, or debas'd;
It makes the Soul with native Glory ſhine;
The neareſt Image of the Pow'r divine!
Virtue may chuſe a high, or low Degree,
('Tis equal ſtill *to Virtue, and to Me)*
Dwell with a PEASANT, or a LORD, or DAME;
Her Peace and Solace ever are the ſame;
She, with ſerene, benign, auſpicious Grace,
Shines as the Sun, alike in ev'ry Place:
Vice is undone, if ill-ſucceſſes ſcreen
The borrow'd Splendour of her Form and Mein
Except her own Deformity, by Art
Conceal'd——She mimic's Virtue's outward Part;
With Part of her diſſembled Charms beguiles,
And wears her Garb, inricht by Fortune's ſmiles;
Approv'd, advanc'd—— th' obedient World ſhe rules,
And makes *the Goſpel*, and *the Law* her Tools;
All things by her, are robb'd of native Grace,
Sacred profan'd, and noble render'd baſe;
She marrs all true Diſtinction——and controuls
Whatever can improve, or dignify our Souls:

See, as a Proof of her ſucceſsful Pow'r,
BRITANNIA's *Genius* (in an evil Hour)
Her Captive made——behold his recent Wound!
His Flag inverted, trailing *on the Ground!*
Dejected, and diſpirited he goes,
Left by his Friends, inſulted by his Foes:
Lo! how She rears her arbitrary Head,
Oe'r Small and Great——her Banners widely ſpread;
Our Youth (in Liveries of foreign Gold)
Before her caper, creep *behind the Old*;
See—— to th' imperious Idol, *Millions run*,
And offer Country, Parent, Friend, or Son;
Hear her black Trump audaciouſly proclaim
Thro' wretched Albion—— that Deſert *is ſhame*,
And vile Corruption——no diſgrace, or blame;
In Soldier, Churchman, Courtier, Man of Pow'r,
All other Proſpects, Hopes of Wealth devour;
And from their low and ſordid Minds expell
All Aim at juſt Renown, for Acting well:
Not only now, its empty Boaſt has Birth,
And Title, Pride, tho' diſtitute of Worth;
Not only now, the Gloſs which Favour gives
To Witlings Mirth, uphlods it, that it lives
Like Summer-fly——gives Decency Offence,
And ſtrives to blaſt all op'ning Excellence;
Not only now, Simplicity forlorn,
And cauteous Meakneſs is the publick Scorn;
Not only now, to brazen Fronts ſubmit
All curious Arts——to pert Aſſurance——Wit;

Not

Not only now, Diſſimulation reigns,
Encumb'ring gallant Minds, with Cloggs and Chains;
Our gen'ral Practice, like a Fog ſurrounds,
And all the Paths of Probity confounds;
Not only now, t' Extremity are brought
Meanneſs of Soul, and Impotence of Thought;
Not only now, Appearances prevail,
And weigh'd with Truth and Reaſon——turn the Scale;
Not only now, Brutality preſides
O'er ſocial Grace——and Ignorance provides
The Wreath, which Learning wears——Self-intreſt takes
Sole Sway——and Fortune all Diſtinction makes:
While meer Pretenders to the Grace of Wit
Preſume to ſet the Bounds of Juſt and Fit;
Manly Decorum wholly uneſteem'd,
And Froth of Manners is Politeneſs deem'd;
Not only now——immediately are grown
Artiſts compleat——in Sciences (unknown
To former Times) All full Proficients are,
Defying Labour, Preſident, or Care;
All things, all Ignoramuſes unfold,
And ev'ry Stripling is in Knowledge, old:
Not only now Impoſture, or Pretence
(Even without the Mask of Inncoence)
The Cringe of Slaves, the Flatterer's crooked Rules,
The winding Courſes of dependent Tools,
The Road of *Camels*, *Elephants*, and *Mules*;
The puritanic Vizor, patriot-Lure,
The Nation's Leach, the Canker of the Poor,

The Craft *of Cheats*, and *Conſtruction of Wiles*,
Are—What our Iſle now envies, or adores;
All lift their Eyes, *with reverential Awe*,
To Crimes, that ſcape, or triumph o'er the Laws;
And ſtrive to compaſs Riches, at th' Expence
Of all true Honour, Honeſty, and Senſe;
As all Things (to whatever Courſe they bend)
By Inclination, to their Center tend;
Whatever thus they ſeemingly explore,
Self-intreſt is the God, that all adore;
Whatever various Purpoſes incite,
In this they centre, and in this unite:
While gen'rous Worth (for which our *Britons* burn'd
In early Times—) a Vagabond is turn'd;
Rejected, thrown into an abject State,
The gen'ral Object of Contempt, or Hate;
It now no Friend, or fit Enjoyment knows,
Except what conſcious Innocence beſtows:
Yet—cou'd my Verſe to future Times impart
The Sentiments of my unbiaſt Heart;
Mankind ſhou'd own, tho' courting proſp'rous Vice,
There was, Who yet (more rationaly nice)
Has dar'd to ſay—Merit alone has Claim
To true Reſpect, Felicity, or Fame:
May ev'ry gen'rous *Briton* thus ſurmiſe,
Strive to recover the neglected Prize
Of Virtue—and again be noble, brave, and wiſe.

F I N I S.